

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADD, ELIMINATE JUDGESHIPS FOR SOME COURTS RELEASED BY STATE COURT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

LANSING, MI, October 19, 2005 – Some of Michigan’s courts can do with fewer judges and some need more, according to a recent report from the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the administrative arm of the Michigan Supreme Court. The report was shared with state courts and legislators yesterday.

SCAO recommends an additional circuit judge for Oakland County as of January 1, 2007. The report also recommends eliminating one Oakland County probate judgeship when a current probate judge retires as of January 1, 2009; a second circuit judgeship should be added at that time, the SCAO report states.

Further recommendations include adding one judgeship each for 7th Circuit Court (Genesee County), 16th Circuit Court (Macomb County), 17th Circuit Court (Kent County), 49th Circuit Court (Mecosta and Osceola Counties) and 55th Circuit Court (Clare and Gladwin Counties).

The report also states that one Wayne County Probate Court judgeship should be eliminated by attrition. In addition, the 41st Circuit Court (Dickinson, Iron, and Menominee Counties), 68th District Court (Flint) and 70th District Court (Saginaw) could each lose one judgeship by attrition, if the SCAO recommendations are adopted by the Michigan Legislature.

Under the state Constitution, Michigan’s judicial branch is responsible for making recommendations to the Legislature regarding the number of judges needed by state courts. SCAO reviews trial courts’ needs for judges, and issues a report to the Legislature, every two years. The review, based on case filings for 2002 through 2004, is a “complex and multidimensional process,” the report notes.

SCAO’s recommendations “are based on a weighted statistical analysis of the caseload of trial courts,” the report states; the weighted caseload analysis takes into account the fact that different types of cases require different amounts of the court’s time and resources, the report explains. If statistics from that initial review indicate that the court needs at least one more judgeship, or has at least one more judgeship than the court needs, SCAO conducts “an extended analysis of additional factors affecting the workload of trial courts, such as the types of cases processed, demographic trends, and the availability of other resources.”

In a number of circuit courts, probate judges serve in the family division. Accordingly, for each judicial circuit, SCAO considered the needs of the circuit and probate court together, the report states.

The table below summarizes the SCAO report's conclusions. Most of the courts were included in the study because SCAO's initial analysis indicated that there were either too many judges or not enough judges in the circuit and probate court, or in the district court.

2005 JUDICIAL RESOURCE RECOMMENDATIONS	
Court	Recommendation
3 rd Circuit/ Wayne County Probate	Eliminate one probate judgeship.
6 th Circuit/ Oakland County Probate	Add one circuit judgeship; on retirement of a probate judge on January 1, 2009, eliminate one probate judgeship and add one circuit judgeship.
7 th Circuit/Genesee County Probate	Add one circuit judgeship.
8 th Circuit/Ionia County Probate, Montcalm County Probate	No change in judgeships.
16 th Circuit/Macomb County Probate	Add one circuit judgeship.
17 th Circuit/Kent County Probate	Add one circuit judgeship.
25 th Circuit/Marquette County Probate	No change in judgeships.
32 nd Circuit/ Gogebic County Probate, Ontonagon County Probate	No change in judgeships.
41 st Circuit/Dickinson County Probate, Iron County Probate, Menominee County Probate	Eliminate one circuit judgeship by attrition.
49 th Circuit/ Probate District 18 of Mecosta County and Osceola County	Add one circuit judgeship.
55 th Circuit and Probate District 17 of Clare County and Gladwin County	Add one circuit judgeship.
8 th District (Kalamazoo County)	No change in judgeships.
36 th District (City of Detroit)	No change in judgeships.
50 th District (City of Pontiac)	No change in judgeships.
52 nd District (Oakland County)	No change in judgeships.
54-A District (City of Lansing)	No change in judgeships.
67 th District (Genesee County)	No change in judgeships.
68 th District (City of Flint)	Eliminate one district judgeship by attrition.
70 th District (Saginaw County)	Eliminate one district judgeship by attrition.

The complete report is available on the "One Court of Justice" website at <http://www.courts.mi.gov/scao/resources/publications/reports/JRRFinalReport2005.pdf>

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